



Provider Supports Subcommittee of the Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC)

Meeting Minutes

December 1, 2021 – 9:00 am-2:15 pm
Virtual Meeting

Welcome, Virtual Meeting Protocols, Meeting Minutes Review & Introductions

- DCYF Deputy Director of Community Engagement Deanna Stewart welcomed attendees and initiated introductions.
- Members reviewed the [October 5 Joint ELAC, Provider Supports Subcommittee, and Parent Advisory Group \(PAG\) Meeting Minutes](#).

Feedback Loop

- [Feedback Loop](#)

Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under the portable background checks (PBC), what would the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) ask of advocates on this issue? It would be great to understand what they mean by a “coordinated approach” just so everyone is on the same page. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We will definitely take that back and get more information on that. • As far as the Fair Start for Kids Act (FSKA) temporary licensing subcommittee, should we just email the Community Engagement team? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Yes, feel free to email us and we will keep track of that.
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Early Achievers

DCYF Quality Recognition and Improvement System (QRIS) Administrator Rachael Brown-Kendall and QRIS Government and Partnerships Liaison Charlotte Campbell provided an update on Tribal pathway in Early Achievers and Early Adopters.

- [Early Achievers Presentation](#)

Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think that the input from the tribes is essential. Will all tribes be able to give input? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Yes. First, our Indian Policy Early Learning (IPEL) committee was involved in this process and that committee has a representation from many tribes that attend those meetings regularly. We also sent out surveys to our larger listserv to get feedback that way. This is optional and not a requirement for all tribes in Early Achievers. • What safeguards are in place to ensure there is no cultural appropriation? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ There is a statewide early learning curriculum called Since Time Immemorial. You can find more information on the Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) website here and on the DCYF website here. • What gaps do you see in representation for the early adopters group? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ So far, we do have great representation across the state. A place where we still need more representation is the Early Childhood Education Assistance Program (ECEAP), Head Start, and we could use more Somali speakers. • How does the new process address the issue of racial bias attributed to the former system? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ That is something we have really been digging into and something we want people to hold us accountable to. We are coming together with community and testing things. This is an opportunity to test the process and make immediate changes based on the feedback that we are receiving. We are incorporating the racial
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	<p>equity theory of change and the agency is using this tool. You can find more information on equity in Early Achievers here.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where do we find the program profile? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ You can find the program profile here. ○ On the Early Achievers Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) page we have a suggestion box that you can drop your questions or concerns and it will be monitored by DCYF staff. This is another way we invite feedback and really want to address the blind spots and encourage you to be an active participant. • On your intentionality for recruiting on the various groups, are there any providers who have shared their concerns on the racial bias? Have they been invited to the other groups that you have stated? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ My belief is yes, providers who have shared feedback were included in the invitation to engage in the revisions work. We know it exists and the issues are out there. We have used coaches as trusted messengers too. • Is there a link for the website to submit our data? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Yes, you can submit data on the Coaching Companion (CECI) webpage.
<p>Next Steps/Follow Up</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you would like to learn more, please reach out to: charlotte.campbell@dcyf.wa.gov

Vaccine Mandate Update

DCYF Senior Child Care Administrator Travis Hansen shared updates and answered questions regarding vaccine requirements for Child Care Providers.

<p>Discussion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My licensor cancelled our scheduled visit and then told me I have a new licensor. I have not heard from a new licensor to date. How does this transition take effect? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If there is a new licensor, they will contact you. • How do I contact my new licensor? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ You can contact your old licensor and ask them who your new one is. Also, sometimes this information is listed in your Provider Profile. • Are we not allowed to hire folks until they have completed the vaccination process? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ They can start as long as they have started the vaccination process. • Is there a WAC or RCW that speaks directly to this? Or is this just the Governor’s directive? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No, there is not. Yes, this is the Governor’s mandate. • You can find a written guide on how to confirm vaccine requirement in MERIT here. • Spanish, Somali and video guidance in three languages are found here. • The date that needs to be entered into MERIT is the date the hiring provider looked at the paperwork and verified the staff has been vaccinated, not the date someone finished the vaccination process. • When I enter the COVID requirement in MERIT it lets me put in any date. There is no clarification there on the date to use. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Agreed it is not clear in the guidance. • I've had teachers enter all three dates into their MERIT account, so if I am understanding this correctly they do not need to do this? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ At the end of the day, we want to have reliable records and we can help and go in and clean that up if you would like, but you only need to enter one date. • I imagine at some point this will be the same requirement as the Tuberculosis (TB) test. When the vaccine becomes available to be used in emergency situations, is that the next step? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ there haven’t been any decisions made. That decision sits with the Department of Health (DOH). • As providers, is there anything specific that we could do to help?
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- I appreciate that, but I think it is the other way around. We need to support you all as providers dealing with staff shortages and such. Our focus here is kids at the end of the day. Getting more feedback from you folks is really good and helps.

Grants and Rate Enhancements Overview

DCYF Operations Deputy Amy Russell, Professional Development Administrator Angela Abrams, QRIS Administrator Rachael Brown-Kendall and Childcare Subsidy Program Administrator Jason Ramynke provided an overview about upcoming dual language designation and infant rate incentives, as well as provided feedback on non-standards hours, and influence in the process for equity grants.

- [Grants and Rate Enhancements Overview Presentation](#)

Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approximately how many people are you planning on having in the Dual Language Advisory (DLL) group? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ That is a good question. We have reached out to several organizations to be involved. We do have an initial meeting with 15 different providers that speak different languages across Washington state. The following organizations we have reached out to for representation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>One America</i> ▪ <i>Child Care Aware of Washington</i> ▪ <i>Imagine Institute</i> ▪ <i>Center for Linguistic and Cultural Democracy</i> ▪ <i>Mom's Rising</i> ▪ <i>Voices of Tomorrow</i> ▪ <i>First 5 Fundamentals/Washington Communities for Children</i> ▪ <i>Washington State Association for Head Start/ECEAP</i> ▪ <i>La Casa Hogar</i> ▪ <i>University of Washington (UW) Cultivate Learning</i> ▪ <i>Institute for Learning and Brain Sciences (I-LABS)</i> ▪ <i>Washington Childcare Centers Association (WCCA)</i> ▪ <i>Service Employees International Union (SEIU)</i> ▪ <i>Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC)</i> ▪ <i>School Districts</i> ▪ <i>The Indian Policy for Early Learning (IPEL) committee will also provide ongoing advisement on the dual language designation work in tribal early learning programs.</i> • In regards to the Child Care Stabilization Grant, to date 4,000 providers have applied. • Do you believe with the applications that have come in, will there be enough funds or possibility of extra funds and if so, will you look at reallocating the funds for the centers that have already applied? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We modeled the current provider numbers that we knew. Right now it is too early to predict if there will be leftover funds. We do not anticipate though there will be leftover funds. • Do you know how many providers there are? Number of family homes? Number of centers? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Stabilization Grant application numbers to date, by provider type: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2,124 Licensed Family Homes ▪ 1395 Child Care Centers ▪ 501 Family, Friend, or Neighbor (FFN) • Webinars are the best because receiving emails with updates are great but it feels like you are alone and with webinars it feels like a collective. • On the question and answers page, I always want to see what is new without opening all the questions...need dated answers and updates.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For website, have the internal search engine actually find information. I find more info from DCYF website by Google searching it, then searching on the DCYF website. • When it comes to transparency with DCYF, sometimes it feels like we are asked to provide feedback as providers and we give it, but DCYF asks just to say they did rather than implement the feedback. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ I have heard this before from providers. This is something we recognize as a need and something we need to do better. • Looping in licensors to widely spread information about these meetings so that providers can join and have an opportunity to provide feedback on upcoming decisions that will affect their work. • Can we just have a document that shows the state and federal rules and an RCW versus WAC that new providers and old providers can understand. • Also, regarding grants, the federal source is raising questions about compliance with federal Title program requirements. • All departments need to be on the same page! • If we see surveys, we need to see what happens with the results. • How did you all like this as a conversation starter? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ I really like this, great live feedback. • Are you wanting to come back to share the survey results from this at the next Provider Supports Subcommittee meeting? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Taking the key takeaways that we heard today and connecting internally and then looking at the ones we can work on sooner compared to the others. I am not sure if this will be another conversation portion or data that can be shared showing the results and next steps.
<p>Next Steps/Follow Up</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We would like your feedback on the grants process, please complete this survey (https://forms.office.com/r/k8TP8FTRyw).

In-Person Monitoring Visits

Travis Hansen provided updates and gave an opportunity to ask questions and provided feedback on the transition from virtual to in-person monitoring.

<p>Discussion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can we please get the complete list of what licensors are looking for at each visit? We understand it is randomly generated but if we had the full list a head of time we could make sure everything is done. Using the WAC is not an acceptable response to this because many licensors tell us different things <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ You can get the full checklist, but the problem with that is what is on the checklist each year is on rotation and changes annually. It has to do with the facility and we have the option of closing sections, for example, if you don't have infants at your center that whole section closes down. • Can our licensor send us the "year one" checklist if that is the rotation we are on? In 2022, if that could get figured out that would be a huge help to us moving forward. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In WA Compass, it is hard to be able to print one checklist here and one checklist there. I know that is something folks have asked for and that is something we will look at to see if we can get that out. • With the Omicron variant now present, there is not enough data about how vaccinated people are responding to this variation of the virus, there is imminent danger to students, families and teachers. Having licensors going into multiple sites in a day/week is not safe. • Can we choose to do "after hour" visits to reduce the risk to our private businesses? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We can do visits on the weekends or after hour visits. I know that adds another work day for providers, but we will figure out a safe way to do this.
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- For the survey after the licensing visit, you said it like it was something that has been going on and was called off. I have never received it. Who receives the survey results and who turns them in? The only way a survey is going to be meaningful is if it goes to someone in leadership and the feedback is actually taken into account and changes happen to improve based on the feedback.
 - Yes, we did roll out some surveys with the initial virtual monitoring visits and we wanted to get some first-hand information and for whatever reason we have stopped doing that and I did not know that we had stopped. We need to start that back up again. These survey results were received in an inbox on the licensing team.
- It would be nice to have received a follow up or communication telling us the surveys are no longer going to be sent out. This is an example of losing trust with DCYF because there is no follow through.
- You said that you were going to follow our center's health policies and some centers aren't allowing people to enter. How long is a licenser expected to stay?
 - We will try and limit the amount of time in the facilities. If it is a complaint visit, we are going to address the complaint and that is that. We are going to focus on whatever it is we are there to verify or see. We are going to do some training with our staff as well. With an in person monitoring visit, it is hard to plan exactly how long that will take. You can ask for a virtual monitoring visit.
- Will licensers limit time to under 15 minutes? I'm not allowing anyone in but staff.
 - We have not settled on a time limit yet, but if we do we will let you all know.
- I would not want a licenser to come into a center that has not had the booster.
 - That is not something that has been decided on and there is no mandate for the booster at this time.
- Virtual monitoring visits is clearly defined that we have the option to not participate it. Also, will DCYF sign a liability form if staff are exposed by a DCYF licenser to COVID?
- Will the licenser provide their vaccine card? Booster?
- Will DCYF pay for the "extra staff" that we will need for the visit?
- We are talking about how the safety of children is very important, but we, child care providers are the ones taking the risk every day and the children we care for with this new variant. We need to treat the decision of going back to in-person monitoring visits with more fluidity. This is not okay to put people in unsafe situations.
 - We have an obligation to keep kids safe, to monitor every provider, every year. We have the waiver in place and the Feds took it away. We didn't do a knee jerk response, we paused and took a look and decided to do virtual visits and now moving to in-person visits which in a way we are out of compliance with the Feds. We are trying to find a happy medium here.
- DCYF makes sure kids are safe by putting us through the licensing process and doing the virtual visits. Providers are keeping kids safe. Compliance issues can be covered by annual visits. Complaints are a side issue from annual visits. That is not a reason to put more requirements on the annual compliance!
- It is really challenging right now. We have had more parents and children in the last few months testing positive than we have throughout the pandemic. I also understand that we need to keep children safe. I understand that monitors are a part of that. Is there a way to look at those basic health and safety items in the WAC right now instead of the whole checklist?
- We have heard from providers that they would rather do in-person monitoring visits. People have their own personal feeling on this, some people are fine with people coming into their center and others don't allow people to come in to their centers. We are trying to meet in the middle here.



- Maybe each center can choose what is the best option for them. Virtual or in person? Nights or weekend option.
- Since the goal is to support and not catch providers doing something wrong, what licensors are looking for should be transparent.
- We prefer in person, also we have our families sign a COVID disclosure form, that reminds them that they and the center are responsible for keeping COVID at bay, also, it reminds them that there is no way to 100% keep COVID out of our center.
- I have heard the idea to place staff files in digital record that I can open for our licensor on the virtual visit by sharing my screen instead of camera on papers. This takes some time and we need allowance for prep time.
 - We do like that idea in sharing screens and making it easier for everybody.
- Other than complaints, providers can request to have a virtual visit rather than in-person monitoring visit?
 - There is a possibility that you wouldn't have that in-person visit unless there is a compliance issue. Although, there is the health and safety visit and there is a possibility during the virtual monitoring visit the licensor did not see all the health and safety they needed to see.
- Can we get a heads up if there will be a follow up health and safety visit if the licensor did not see everything they needed to during the virtual monitoring visit?
 - Yes, we will follow up on that.
- Every provider should expect the same circumstances across the state.
- If a licensor is not following the expectations that have been shared with us, what action should a provider take? Call a supervisor?
 - Yes, absolutely. They can call their supervisor or elevate it to their Appointing Authority (AA) level. All of those are reasonable.
- Where can we find that contact information?
 - It should be on the DCYF website, but we need to check that. Feel free to ask the supervisor who their AA is or reach out to me: Travis at travis.hansen@dcyf.wa.gov.
- Can we get more guidelines on cleaning in regards to child cares?
 - That is definitely something we can do.
- It would be really nice if the licensed centers had a contact list with names and numbers.
- Why can't licensors verify a certificate if MERIT doesn't have the information listed? My staff member had completed her certificate but MERIT didn't have it verified because of the "high volume of requests". We were marked out of compliance even though I had the physical form in her file.
 - If the individual is marked out of compliance, they can ask for a review to escalate that. It would go to the supervisor first and then the state level where it would probably be overturned.
- To confirm, if an in person visit is needed, it can be scheduled outside of business hours.
 - Yes, in your situation.
- Can we receive how this feedback is being received and utilized and hear back from licensing team on how our concerns are going to be addressed and the timeline implementation of in-person monitoring visits.
 - We are looking at having some sort of message go out on January 1, 2022 but at this point with the new variant coming out that may not happen. We will be in communication in the new year in regards to what next steps are.



DCYF Diaper Changing Privacy Petition

DCYF Childcare Policy Program Manager Tyler Farmer provided an update from the department regarding a recent petition to the department to enhance privacy during diaper changes.

<p>Discussion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Just because you receive one request or complaint from one parent and how quickly it was turned around for DCYF to jump and change this. This is not appropriate when there needs to be more feedback before changing this rule. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ That is a good point, anyone can complete a petition and we encourage this. • When you have one teacher in an infant room, that teacher needs to be able to change their diaper and still see the other infants. If this changes, this could create safety issues for infants and children. • Diaper changing stations are set up in a fashion to protect both the child and the staff. We have to be very careful with changes to diaper changing stations. • This is a private business' decision to change their center not a statewide decision. • Also, insurance for programs could be impacted by changes with this rule. • Is this a petition as in he went out and got people to sign this or did he just fill out a complaint form? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ The petition is statutory in accordance with RCW 34.05.330. • We have to protect the children and staff. Some centers may have no control of the physical set-up of their classrooms. • Have they done a cost analysis on this new rule change? • We are collecting your feedback and will share that feedback before making decisions. • We have been told that WAC's can't be changed without the Negotiated Rule Making (NRM) process? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ NRM is one of several for the Administrative Procedure Act. You can find more information here. • Link to actual petition? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Here is the petition form. • But if "no" is stated, does it go to the Governor? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ If "no" is stated, then the petitioner has the option to send their petition to the Governor. • I would highly encourage you that you need to come to providers for our input on this because if the diaper changing station rule is changed based on this one's person's petition, then that will affect insurance for child care providers. If it affects insurance, then there won't be infant care. • Who decided the WAC needed to be improved? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Internally DCYF. • Are there people that actually have worked in centers that review these petitions? • The next step is to draft language in this WAC in response to the petition and then bring that to this group for your feedback, then wordsmith the feedback. If we are comfortable with this, we would then look at public hearing rights and the regular rule making process.
<p>Next Steps/Follow Up</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tyler Farmer contact info – tyler.farmer@dcyf.wa.gov • Link to petition form: https://www.dfi.wa.gov/documents/rulemaking/rule-petition.pdf

Closing Remarks/Adjourn

- [Meeting Reflection Question Responses and Feedback](#)

<p>Next Steps/Follow Up</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The next Provider Supports Subcommittee advisory group meeting will be on February 9, 2022.
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